



agriculture

*historical
preservation*

*community
access*

*sustainable
practices*

*education
research*

Clark County 78th Street / WSU Property **FINAL CONCEPT PLAN – Narrative**

September 2009



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FINAL CONCEPT PLAN – Narrative

BACKGROUND

In 1926, the 79 acres located at 1919 NE 78th Street, about half a mile east of Highway 99 in Hazel Dell, was established as Clark County's poor farm where poverty stricken residents were sent to live and work. The residents of the poor farm produced everything needed for food, including vegetables, fruit, milk and meat. The farm included orchards, livestock, several buildings and a cemetery. Existing historical landmarks on the property include the cemetery, the main building and a housing unit/duplex. The County acquired the original 100 acres from a citizen who was in the county's debt in the amount of \$400.

The county operated the poor farm at this site until the mid-1940s. In 1949, the county deeded the property to Washington State University (WSU). The deed contained a provision by which the property ownership would revert to the county in the event that WSU discontinued using it for agricultural experiments. In April 2008, through a mutual agreement between Clark County and WSU, the ownership reverted back to Clark County following nearly 60 years of use for agricultural research. The deed transfer agreement calls for a partnership between WSU and Clark County regarding the agricultural use and long-term management of the property.

A few months prior to the shift in ownership, County staff, in partnership with WSU and under the direction of County Commissioner Marc Boldt, began looking into the possibility of developing a concept plan for the property that would preserve its agricultural heritage, focus on sustainable practices and provide community access. To steer that effort, the Clark County Board of Commissioners adopted the following purpose and guiding principles, with input from community stakeholders.



PURPOSE

In considering future options for the use of the 78th Street property, Clark County is committed to, first and foremost, preserving the property's agricultural heritage and honoring its history as a poor farm by establishing uses that fairly and equitably benefit the community.

PRINCIPLES

To achieve Clark County's vision for this site, the following principles will guide project decisions:

- ☐ Celebrate our agricultural heritage
- ☐ Interpret Clark County and Washington State University's presence on the site
- ☐ Showcase and promote sustainable and commercial agricultural practices
 - Secure, local, seasonal, organic, biodynamic farming, and permaculture
- ☐ Support agricultural research that supports sustainable farming practices
- ☐ Enhance community wellness and inspire life-long learning
- ☐ Promote community volunteerism
- ☐ Integrate a variety of activities and resources that provide community access
- ☐ Reflect sound fiscal policy in decision-making matters

The purpose and principles have been developed and used during an extensive public outreach process that began in early 2008 and continued through the fall of 2009. This document summarizes the public input generated throughout this process to guide the development of the concept plan. The concept plan outlines broad uses for the site and lays the groundwork for developing a more refined master plan; a document that will define appropriate programming and layout of the property to best meet the needs of the site and the community.

This property should remain in agricultural use because of the County's long-term commitment to WSU and the importance of farming in our County. Farming is part of our heritage and should bridge our history with the role that farming plays in our County's future.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

Clark County recognizes the importance of this project to the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader community. Prior to considering future uses for the 78th Street/WSU site, the County developed a strategy to gain public input related to the future development and uses of the site.

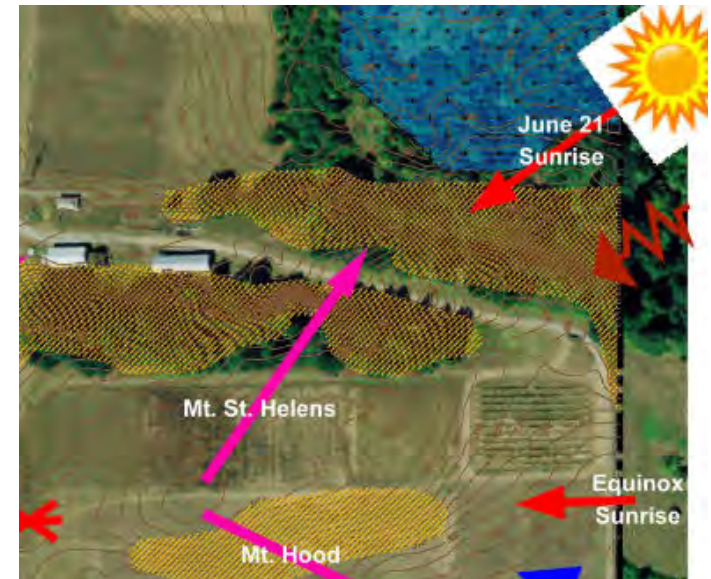
Clark County worked with a consultant, JLA Public Involvement, Inc., to assist with public outreach, community meetings and surveys. As a result of over a year of work, the County, with assistance from JLA, developed several public outreach tools to generate involvement and input throughout the process, including:

- ❑ **Stakeholder Interviews** - During the months of April and May of 2008, nearly 20 project stakeholders were interviewed in order to uncover unidentified issues and determine existing expectations related to the development of the 78th Street / WSU property.
- ❑ **Community Sounding Board** – A group comprised of 15 community members from a diverse cross-section of stakeholder groups was tasked with reviewing key documents and milestones related to the project and providing feedback to the project team regarding potential uses.
- ❑ **Management Team** – A small group of managers representing various Clark County departments, as well as WSU, provided guidance to the process, principles, and potential uses related to the property.
- ❑ **Coordination with Other Groups** – Project staff from Clark County met with other community groups such as the Three Creeks Advisory Council, the Neighborhood Advisory Council of Clark County, the Hazel Dell Salmon Creek Business Association and the Clark County Food Systems Council.
- ❑ **Public Workshop** – Clark County hosted a public workshop on April 9, 2009 at Gaiser Middle School. Over 160 community members attended the event. The purpose of the workshop was to share the project guiding principles, current and considered uses for the site, and collect feedback on public preferences for other site uses that would help inform and establish a concept plan for the property.



- ❑ **On-line Survey** – Clark County invited citizens to complete an online survey, which began on April 17 and closed on May 8, 2009. A total of 321 people provided responses to the online survey. Public input generated through the online survey was used to identify popular themes and preferred uses that were considered and integrated into the draft concept plan.
- ❑ **Technical Advisory Committee** – In the fall of 2008, Clark County hired Abundance Consulting to coordinate a 9-day education course in permaculture for a group of over twenty participants, who were known as the Technical Advisory Committee. Guest lecturers provided education in ecological and permaculture design methods, using the 78th Street / WSU property as a model. At the conclusion of the course, participants created a permaculture-based concept plan for the property. The intent of this exercise was to inform the future site planning process for the agricultural areas on the site.
- ❑ **Public Comment Period** – Between August 7th and August 21st, 2009, Clark County invited the community to submit comments on three draft concept plans with varying levels of development and to specifically indicate which potential uses and elements they most and least prefer. Thirty-five people completed the online survey available on the project website and ten filled out paper comment forms available with an informational display in the Public Service Center lobby. Overall, respondents preferred the Level III plan because it included the greatest amount of activities and opportunities for agricultural use and education while still maintaining natural habitat.

All the information gathered to date has provided a broad range of ideas that will help guide the future development of the 78th Street/WSU property. Several themes have emerged through this process and are now incorporated as part of the Concept Plan. They are outlined in the following pages.



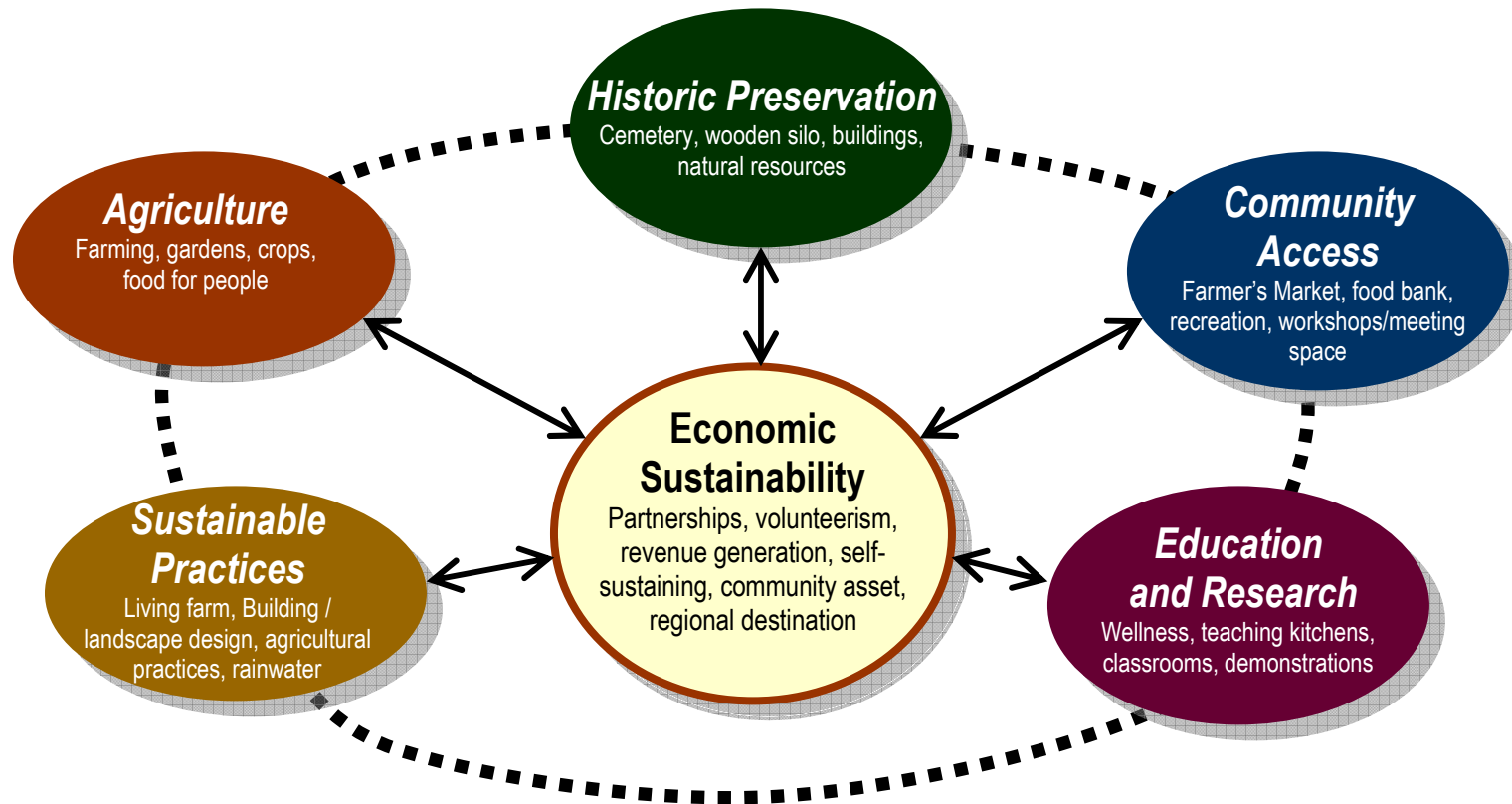
Appendix C: Simple Soil Survey
Abundance Consulting "Quick And Dirty" Soil Quality Assessment
Old Poor Farm Seminar Series,
Washington State University Extension
1919 NE 78th Street

INDICATOR:	Method	Quality: Good
Soil Tilth, ~ Test while Moist- not dry, not wet.	~Dig in slightly with trowel, gather a handful of soil. If you can, its likely good or fair, if you cant, its likely poor.	Friable, Pliable, crumbly, easily broken by fingers, structure/texture variable, visible pores
Compaction ~Test when moist	~poke pencil sized stick into ground	Soil probe (pencil, etc) slides in easily to 4+"

CONCEPT PLAN PURPOSE – Creating Community Vitality

Clark County and WSU have an established partnership and long-term commitment to retain the agricultural heritage of the property in future planning and development efforts. The property lies in the heart of Hazel Dell and the Vancouver-Clark County urban area. It is ideally suited to continue its agricultural legacy while at the same time serving as a regional community asset for education, recreation and special events. The site will serve as a regional hub for farming, agricultural research, community education, historic interpretation and recreation.

Purpose. The concept plan is meant to narrow the multitude of ideas generated throughout the public outreach process into a cohesive set of programs, uses and spaces that compliment the features of the site. The concept plan will explore functional relationships of the various programs and amenities. The size and specific locations of the uses in the concept plan are not to scale and represent possible locations. The concept plan will guide the development of a master plan which will determine general layout of program areas, necessary amenities (i.e. parking, access, etc.) and uses. There will be a wide variety of uses on this site and it is important that they collaborate to best serve the community.



AGRICULTURE

The agricultural practices that may be applicable on this site are varied. Once the master plan is established, a volunteer group will be assembled by the County to help guide the specific plot size, purpose and use. The goal will be to identify the amount of land made available for each agricultural purpose and use; while at the same time maintaining consistency with the sites natural features and the needs of the community. The agricultural uses should provide the region with an array of farming opportunities and demonstration areas to help inform and educate the public about nutrition, personal and commercial farming, sustainability, our Clark County history and natural resources. The agricultural uses will evolve over time and the spaces should remain flexible to best serve site users and the property. All uses should utilize sustainable / low-impact practices and provide educational opportunities.

Future agricultural programming could include, but not be limited to:

- **Organic farming.**
- **Biodynamic farming.**
- **Permaculture.**
- Vegetables, fruit trees, and **hillside/terraced farming** such as berries and/or grapes.
- A **public produce stand** that will offer products harvested from the site.
- A **start-up education program for new farmers** to continue our strong agricultural heritage and economic vitality in Clark County.
- The **Master Gardeners Foundation** and greenhouses, which generates proceeds that support a wide range of horticultural outreach activities.
- **Community garden plots** for use by Clark County residents.
- Relocating **WSU Extension programs** and staff from their current location at the CASEE Center to the 78th Street/WSU site; sharing space with the Clark County Food Bank
- Maintain / restore **greenhouses** on site for research / agricultural uses
- **Small animal** (i.e. chickens, goats) **rearing** to demonstrate animal based agricultural products
- Promotion of **Community Supported Agriculture** (CSAs) in Clark County



COMMUNITY ACCESS

Located in the heart of Hazel Dell and the Vancouver/Clark County urban area, it is anticipated that the site will serve as a focal point for the community. This site is large enough to accommodate all of the elements outlined in the guiding principles, including providing the public with gathering places for learning, sharing, and community building. There may be several amenities that could accommodate the general public, including but not limited to:

- **Community Gardens** - Provide plots where neighbors can rent space to grow their own food. Coordination with local educational programs could be done for new gardeners.
- **Open Air Farmer's Market** - Establish a space where local farmers can sell products to the public and restaurants – including vegetables, fruits, flowers, locally grown/processed foods.
- **Clark County Food Bank** – Build a new facility to serve as a resource to provide locally grown food to our neighbors in need, as well as a collection site for distribution and nutrition education.
- **Multi-modal path/trail** - Develop a system throughout the property to include interpretive signage explaining the historic nature of the site as the former Poor Farm as well as the agricultural practices employed at the site.
- **Community Learning Center** - Create a facility to provide opportunities for users of all ages to come and enjoy, learn and visit. Allow seniors and children to work in programs to share techniques and stories about gardens and food production and preparation. Include commercial kitchens / demonstration classroom for public nutrition education and other workshops. Include health/wellness options.
- **Viewpoint Shelter** – Create a focal point for community use and to showcase the views of Mt. Adams, Mt. Ranier, Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Hood.
- **Expansion of Hazel Dell Park** – Expand Hazel Dell Community Park by 6-10 acres to expand and enhance community access.



community access

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

The history of this site tells a story about Clark County's agricultural past. This legacy can be shared with the public through the preservation and reuse of existing buildings, natural features and past uses. Many hands have worked the soil on this property, each with a unique perspective, goal and interest. These stories can be interpreted to help guide future farming and gardening on the site, inform and educate the public, and preserve a piece of Clark County's cultural traditions. The features that can be preserved and or reused to demonstrate Clark County's rich agricultural past include:

Existing buildings – Interpretive Center and community meeting rooms

The buildings on site include the main building, a housing unit/duplex and several outbuildings. The main building, constructed by the County on what was then known as 'Poor Farm Road' as a one story stucco building in 1926 for the cost of approximately \$21,000, housed the poor farm residents. Each resident was provided a private bed separated by a partition in the basement of the main building. Records indicate that between 30 and 35 men women and children lived and worked at the farm at any given time. The main building also housed poor farm personnel, including one manager, one matron, one cook, one laundry helper, and one farm hand. Other structures on site at one time included a 50 x 50 foot barn and a 24 x72 foot chicken coop. The main building on 78th Street (formerly known as Poor Farm Road) could be used to interpret Clark County's historic agricultural heritage as well as provide meeting space and offices for current users.

Cemetery

Approximately one (1) acre of the site is the historic Poor Farm cemetery. The cemetery contains the remains of at least 200 men, women and children, which included residents of the poor farm as well as non-residents. Burials were carried out at the poor farm cemetery from approximately 1913 to 1937.

All but two of the nameplates used to identify the deceased have rusted away or have been stolen and the two that are remaining most likely are not in their original location. A plaque on a large rock was placed at the cemetery in 1966 and reads, "In life forsaken, in death forgotten, these unknown pioneers built our destiny."



Natural History – Wetland / Habitat Enhancements

The rolling topography, mature fir trees and emergent wetlands tell a tale about how the soil, wind and water have shaped this property. Wildlife has inhabited his area and can help educate the public about natural sciences and their relationship to agriculture. Enhancements can be made to these areas for passive use and education.

Agricultural History – Historic Interpretation

During the era of the poor farm, 76 acres of the site produced a number of agricultural products to feed the farm residents as well as sell to the County Hospital and the County Isolation Hospital. At one time, the farm produced the following products: milk, eggs, butter, sweet cream, fresh vegetables, fruit, berries, dry corn, potatoes, sauerkraut, pickles, oats, wheat, clover seed, hay, straw, rhubarb, veal, turkey, chicken, pork, and beef. Farm credits produced annually from the poor farm totaled over \$5,000.

There are many ways to interpret agricultural history on this site and in Clark County. The significance of fruit tree crops, grains, etc. can be told through interpretive signage, displaying historic farming equipment, reconstructing barns and other farming structures, such as a wooden silo. Future historic preservation and interpretation efforts could include, but not be limited to:

- Relocating a wooden silo from an old farming site at the corner of 72nd Avenue and 119th Street in Clark County.
- Restoration and reuse of the existing buildings including a barn or shed, and the poor farm duplex as well as the main building.



historical preservation

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

By nature, any future development on this site shall meet the highest level of sustainable design and minimize its impact to the natural features of the property. There will be a need for additional amenities, including paving, parking, pathways, and buildings to meet the program uses, regulatory requirements and maintenance/services needs. All designs shall use sustainable design practices with minimal impact to the land, including innovative storm water design. There are many examples of buildings and amenities that minimize impacts while maximizing the use of natural resources (refer to page 16).

- **Living Farm** – A residential building could be established to demonstrate affordable sustainable development including: non-toxic recycled and natural building materials; renewable energy, water independence; and low impact development. The single-family farmhouse would employ local experts possibly utilizing barn raising-style educational events. Revenues from these courses could cover a portion of the labor and construction costs for the infrastructure, while grants provided by the federal and state government and non-profits would supplement the rest. The most sustainable and practicable construction methodology is outlined by Cascadia Region Green Building Council's Living Building Challenge (LBC).
- **Sustainable design practices** – These should be utilized for all building and landscape design and should follow LEED certification principles, all buildings and amenities should be as environmentally sensitive as possible.
- **Storm water** - Any built facilities have the potential to increase storm water runoff, therefore all designs shall utilize pervious techniques, rain water collection for use, and other techniques to appropriately manage storm water. The designs should exceed regulatory requirements and utilize creative reuse scenarios wherever possible.
- **On-going maintenance** - The site maintenance shall be considered during the design of the site so that best management practices can be applied.



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

This site will have three primary purposes: 1) to promote agricultural heritage; 2) to help educate our citizens and visitors about various agriculture techniques, Clark County's agricultural history, and the future of agriculture in our community; and 3) support agricultural research that promotes sustainable farming practices. The various partnerships, funding resources and on-going commitment to the site will be critical to the long-term success of the educational and research components of this site. The educational facilities and amenities should have a consistent look and experience for the various users of the site.

Future opportunities for education and research include:

- A **Community Learning Center** for demonstrations and workshops that could be sponsored by programs such as the Food Systems Council, WSU and Clark College. Healthy food choices are one component of healthy living. Educational programs that involve healthy food production, cooking, preserving, recreation, etc. can provide a complete health menu to citizens. Wellness-based recreation programs could also be offered at this location and on the trails.
- Teach **commercial and personal farming** to the community through programs such as Clark College and WSU Extension.
- Model/demonstrate growing **personal gardens** taught by local experts such as Master Gardeners, Clark College and WSU Extension.
- An **Outdoor Classroom** to create learning opportunities for local youth available to Clark County school districts and other youth programs.
- **Enhance existing wetland** areas for water quality restoration and riparian area demonstration projects, even mitigation uses.
- Develop **surface water/rain water** demonstration projects.
- Support **agricultural research** conducted on site that promotes sustainable agricultural practices.
- Establish **wildlife habitat** education areas.
- Create **Children's gardens** and other areas for learning in a beautiful, fun, hands-on approach that can be used by kids, schools and visitors (such as pizza garden, rainbow garden, etc.).
- **Internships / Stewardship** – provide opportunities for learning.



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

To make the Clark County 78th Street / WSU property a reality, and a success, Clark County, with assistance from local partners, will need to clearly define the funding resources and mechanisms that will be used to create an economically viable and sustainable project. There are many examples of similar projects throughout the United States that provide services and programs to the local community as well as serve as a regional attraction. These example projects demonstrate that there are a variety of revenue generating options that can be produced through activities on the site in order to help maintain the programs and amenities:

Partnerships

There are a number of possible partners, including WSU that can add support, programming, and creative thinking to help build the success of this project. Other partners could include the various agriculture and farming groups, 4-H, Master Gardeners/Composters, etc. There also may be opportunities for local philanthropists.

Grants

With a focus on community health and wellness there are grant opportunities available to help establish facilities and fund programs.

Volunteerism

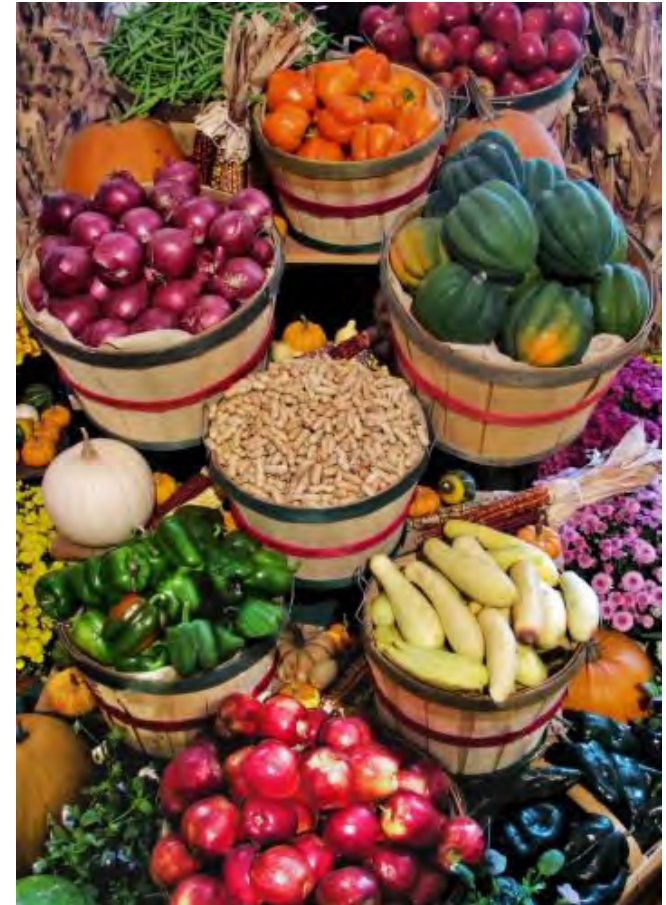
By nature of the uses, volunteers can be utilized to help maintain, enhance and develop many of the elements and programs proposed for this site.

Community Asset

An open air farmer's market, food bank, educational areas and other venues can help connect the site's programs with the broader community, either through services offered or revenue options.

Regional Destination

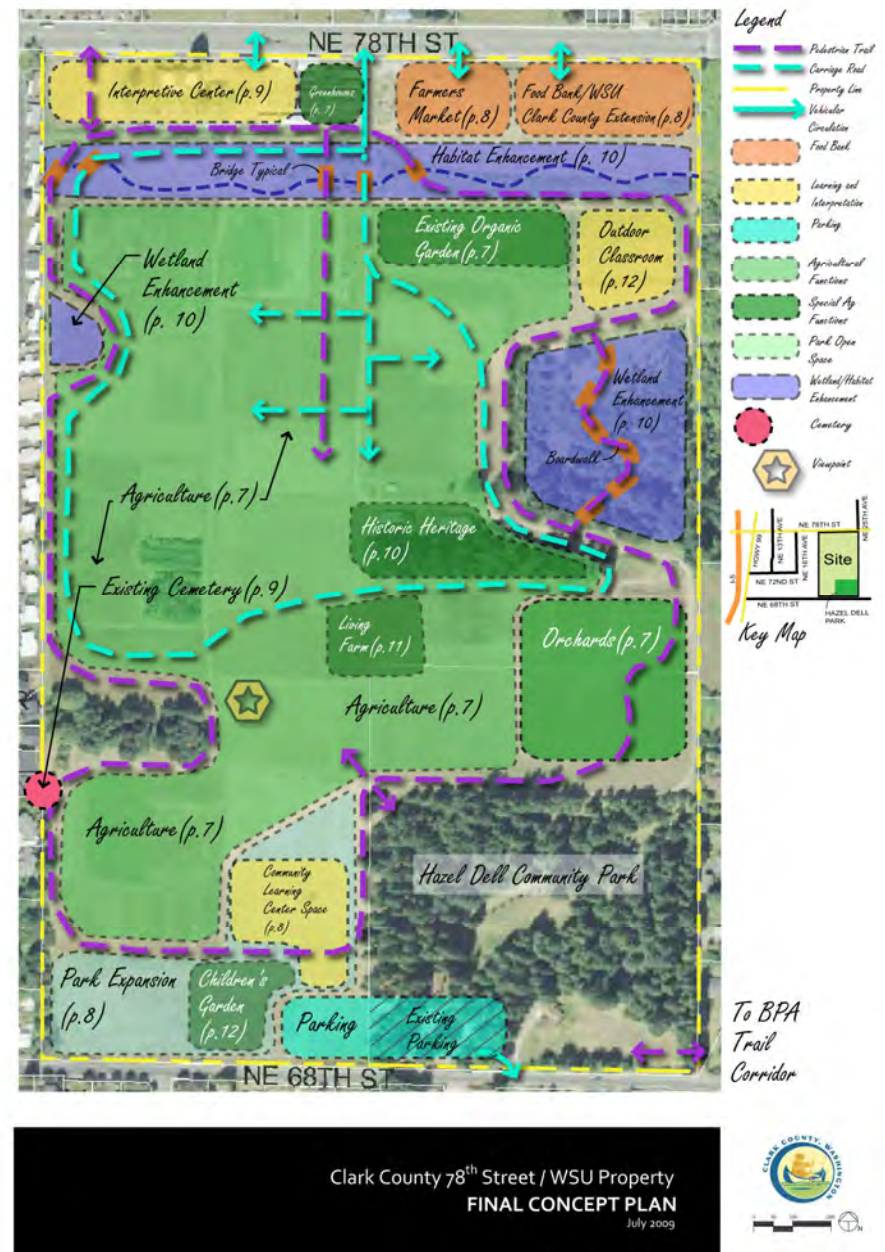
This site holds the potential to be a regional draw for a number of users, including schools of all levels, visiting tourists and the local community. This potential can help feed the on-going revenue stream through sales, fees and donations that will be needed to maintain capital facilities. There is an opportunity to promote and enhance redevelopment efforts within the Highway 99 Sub-Area, including the trail connections.



CONCEPT PLAN MAP

Clark County, Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation, WSU staff worked collaboratively to consider public feedback regarding the options included in three concepts for the 78th Street/WSU Property. Their discussion resulted in narrowing the three draft concepts into a preferred final concept plan. The final concept plan will help guide the development of a master plan which will outline future enhancements for the 78th Street/WSU property. The goal is to create a regional hub for farming, agricultural research, community education, historic interpretation and recreation. The following elements are included in the concept plan map for the purpose of conceptualization. The location/siting of these features and other logistics will be determined through the master planning phase.

- A substantial portion of the site will be devoted to **agricultural practices**, such as organic gardens, community gardens, start-up education for new farmers, orchards, berry production and others.
- The Existing buildings will be renovated and reused for **learning and historic interpretation**. The main building would house offices and a classroom/meeting room and would provide historic interpretive opportunities. Interpretive displays regarding the history of agriculture in Clark County could be used to give site visitors information about previous generations' use of the site.
- **Clark County Food Bank** would be operated separately from the main site and would work in partnership with WSU Extension and other partners to offer nutrition education and other related workshops.
- **WSU Extension staff and programs** may transfer from their current location at the CASEE Center to the 78th Street/WSU site and will share space at the Clark County Food Bank.
- The **Master Gardeners Foundation** will continue to work at the site, primarily in greenhouses.
- The existing **parking** area will be upgraded to allow for ADA parking and access. Walkways and entrances would also be updated to allow for **ADA access**. Parking at Hazel Dell Community Park would be expanded and enhanced and to



serve as a trailhead for pedestrian use on the site.

- A **pedestrian loop trail** would allow visitors the opportunity to walk the site, view the various agricultural uses and provide access to the poor farm cemetery.
- The **poor farm cemetery** would be restored and enhanced to include interpretive signage.
- The area wetlands will be restored to allow for **wetland habitat enhancement** to provide wildlife habitat, plant diversity, interpretation and education. A boardwalk through the wetland allows further opportunity to discover and learn about our local plant and animal populations.
- A **Living Farm** would be established as a community demonstration project, promoting sustainable living and farming techniques.
- Maintenance and emergency **vehicle access** will be added to allow for limited access to the property.
- An open air **Farmer's Market** could be established on the site for local farmers to sell their produce on a regular basis.
- An **Outdoor Classroom** and **Children's Garden** could provide hands-on agricultural learning opportunities for visiting kids and school groups.
- **Hazel Dell Community Park** would be expanded to allow for greater community access to the site from the park and the BPA trail corridor. Amenities would include a **Community Learning Center** where residents and school groups could take classes in a variety of agriculture-related subjects. **Meeting rooms** would be available for community gatherings.
- All amenities would integrate the highest level of **sustainable design** and minimize impact to the site.

EXAMPLES OF LIVING FARMS AND COMMUNITY BASED AGRICULTURE

There are many examples around the country of community based farms and historic interpretive farms. These sites can be the heart of continuing the tradition of locally grown produce, continuing education of farming techniques to school children and a place for the community to gather. These sites are the locations for heritage festivals, fall harvest festivals and other community events. Here is a list of a few examples, several of which are award winning for their innovative approach to farming, design and educational outreach:

Angelic Organics Learning Centers

<http://www.csalearningcenter.org/what/on-farm/group>

The Prairie Crossings Learning Farms

<http://www.prairiecrossing.com/pc/site/organic-farm3.html>

Tidewater Farms

<http://www.extension.umaine.edu/tidewater/vision.htm>

EcoVillage

<http://www.ecovillagefarm.org/index.htm>

Sunshine Farm Markets

<http://www.sunshinefarmmarket.com/217.html>

Michigan 4-H Children's Garden

<http://4hgarden.msu.edu/>

